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1970/09/22

MEMORANDUM

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

129

INFORMATION

September 22, 1970

SECRET/NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*
SUBJECT: A Longer Look at the New Communist Peace Proposal
on Vietnam

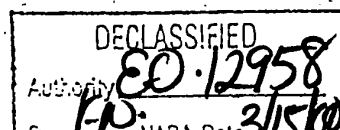
Further study of the full text of the new Communist peace proposal (Tab A) confirms the initial impressions which I reported to you yesterday and adds some others.

Essentially, the proposal does the following things:

- It gives the Communists not just a negotiating platform, but a better vehicle for political and propaganda operations against us and against the South Vietnamese Government. In fact, it could be designed to serve the Communist cause even more if there were no negotiations than if there were some.
- It was obviously timed to impact on our elections.
- It focuses great pressure against the GVN.
- It toughens the Communist position on several issues, largely by making it more specific.
- It appears intended to tempt us to state a deadline for our pull-out and to deal with the NLF, particularly on prisoner matters.
- It also offers some room for exploration, but it contains no real breakthrough on any issue.

General Strategic Purpose. Mme. Binh's proposal may be regarded as part of Hanoi's effort to counter the Vietnamization policy.

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-- It gives the Communists a long-range political platform with which they can hope to maximize political pressures in the U.S. and South Vietnam and thus counter the effects of our current policies in both places.

-- We doubt that Hanoi expects a favorable response from us on its new proposal. But it may hope for a favorable response from U.S. public opinion or from South Vietnamese anti-government politicians. In that case, Hanoi may hope that our side will eventually be forced to accept its terms even though the new program does not point to any opening for a rapid settlement.

-- Our impression that the new program envisages the possibility of no general negotiated settlement is strengthened by its failure to mention the Geneva Accords, which had been cited frequently in the ten points.

Some Hardening. The new program hardens the Communist position in several ways, sometimes simply by making it more specific:

-- It categorically excludes dealing with Thieu-Ky-Khiem and it attacks them sharply, which the earlier ten points had not done.

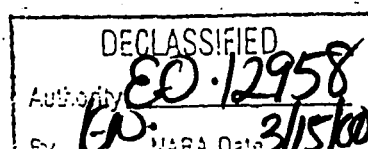
-- It states that the formation of a "provisional coalition government" is "indispensable" to organizing truly free elections.

-- It is more specific on the possible composition of such a "provisional coalition," arranging it in a "troika" which would emasculate the organized anti-Communist forces.

-- It states clearly that "implementing the modalities" of a cease-fire must await complete settlement. There is some ambiguity here, since the program implies a cease-fire toward U.S. forces as soon as they begin withdrawing or even announce their intention to withdraw, but it is clear that the Communists would then focus their fire on the ARVN.

-- It gives a deadline for U.S. withdrawal, which the ten points had not done, but the deadline provides for nine months and is thus more generous than Mme. Binh's earlier six-months proposal (which was not part of the ten points).

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Easier on U.S. in Some Ways. On the other hand, the proposal is less assertive than the earlier ten points in some matters regarding the United States. It conveys the impression that we could get out easily if we were not concerned about what happened later:

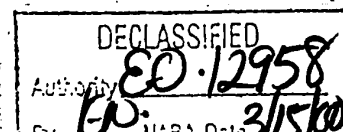
- It specifically concentrates its demands regarding the U.S. in the first clause, thus telling us that we can quickly and painlessly extricate ourselves from Vietnam if we will only do the thing listed in the clause, i. e., set a withdrawal date.
- The POW issue, which the ten points had relegated to the "aftermath" of the war, is related directly to our announcement of a withdrawal date.
- There is no demand for reparations (though these could, as in the case of the ten points, be brought up in negotiations on POW's).
- There is no assertion in the new program that we must "renounce" Thieu-Ky-Khiem, as the Communists have frequently demanded (although unilateral withdrawal would amount to the same thing).
- There is no demand like the one in the ten points for international supervision of U.S. withdrawals.

Possibilities for Exploration. There are also some possibilities for exploration, although they may not offer us very much:

- Lengthening the withdrawal period further.
- The new program speaks of an agreement on "implementation," which could leave room for placing our own demands about Communist reciprocity.
- The new program still calls for talks on the matter of "Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam" (a euphemism for Northern forces in the South), though it still remains unclear with whom Hanoi would be prepared to discuss this.

Appeal to South Vietnamese. The new program also appears designed to appeal to South Vietnamese politicians who are against the GVN, as well as to the discontented urban and rural elements in South Vietnam:

- It takes a somewhat softer line on unification than the ten points.



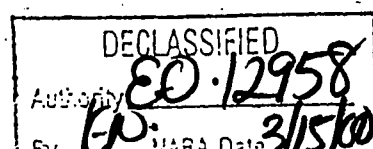
-- It lists the evils of the Thieu-Ky-Khiem administration at greater length than the ten points, and promises to rectify them.

-- It shows more clearly than earlier Communist statements that the "provisional coalition government" would have lots of openings for persons opposed to the GVN, and also has more material on the "freedom" of elections run by the coalition.

-- Like earlier proposals, it promises that there will be no reprisals.

-- It thus conveys the impression that South Vietnam's politicians could get along with the Communists if they would just get rid of three men.

"Fight-Talk" Possibility. It remains to be seen whether the Communists will be prepared to engage us in any dialogue on the new program, and also whether they will attempt to back it up with any military action in the field.



MADAME BINH'S SEPTEMBER 17 EIGHT POINT PROPOSAL

To respond to the deep desire for peace of broad sectors of the people in South Vietnam, in the United States and in the world, on the instructions of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, I would like to further elaborate on a number of points in the 10-point overall solution as follows:

1) The U.S. Government must put an end to its war of aggression in Vietnam, stop the policy of "Vietnamization" of the war, totally withdraw from South Vietnam troops, military personnel, weapons, and war materials of the United States as well as troops, military personnel, weapons, and war materials of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp, without posing any condition whatsoever, and dismantle all U.S. military bases in South Vietnam.

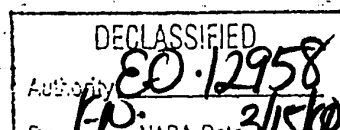
In case the U.S. Government declares it will withdraw from South Vietnam all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp by June 30, 1971, the people's liberation armed forces will refrain from attacking the withdrawing troops of the United States and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp, and the parties will engage at once in discussions on:

-- The question of ensuring safety for the total withdrawal from South Vietnam of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp.

-- The question of releasing captured military men.

2) The question of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves.

3) The warlike and fascist Thieu-Ky-Khiem administration, an instrument of the U.S. policy of aggression, are frantically opposing peace, striving to call for the intensification and expansion of the war, and for the prolongation of the U.S. military occupation of South Vietnam, and are enriching themselves with the blood of the people. They are serving the U.S. imperialist aggressors who massacre their compatriots and devastate their country. They have stepped up the "pacification" campaigns to terrorize the people and hold them in the vice of their regime, set up a barbarous system of jails of the type of "tiger cages" in Con Dao and established a police regime of the utmost cruelty in South Vietnam. They carry out

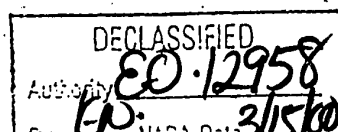


ferocious repression against those who stand for peace, independence, neutrality and democracy, regardless of their social stock, political tendencies and religions. They repress even those who are not of their clan. They increase forcible pressganging and endeavour to plunder the property of the South Vietnam people so as to serve the U.S. policy of "Vietnamization" of the war. The restoration of genuine peace in South Vietnam necessitates the formation in Saigon of an administration without Thieu, Ky and Khiem, an administration which stands for peace, independence, neutrality, which improves the people's living conditions, which ensures democratic liberties such as freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief, etc., and releases those who have been jailed for political reasons, and dissolves concentration camps so that the inmates there may return to and live in their native places. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam is prepared to enter into talks with such an administration on a political settlement of the South Vietnam problem so as to put an end to the war and restore peace in Vietnam.

4) The South Vietnam people will decide themselves the political regime of South Vietnam through really free and democratic general elections, elect a national assembly, work out a constitution of a national and democratic character and set up a government reflecting the entire people's aspirations and will for peace, independence, neutrality, democracy, and national concord.

The general elections must be held in a really free and democratic way. The modalities of the elections must guarantee genuine freedom and equality during the electoral campaigns and vote proceedings to all citizens, irrespective of their political tendencies, including those who are living abroad. No party shall usurp for itself the right to organize general elections and lay down their modalities. The general elections organized by the U.S. puppet administration in Saigon at the bayonets of the U.S. occupying troops cannot be free and democratic.

A provisional government of broad coalition is indispensable for the organization of really free and democratic general elections and also for ensuring the right to self-determination of the South Vietnam people during the transitory period between the restoration of peace and the holding of general elections.



5) The provisional coalition government will include three components:

- Persons of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.
- Persons of the Saigon administration, really standing for peace, independence, neutrality, and democracy.
- Persons of various political and religious forces and tendencies standing for peace, independence, neutrality, and democracy including those who, for political reasons, have to live abroad.

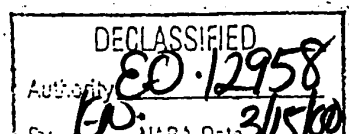
The provisional coalition government will implement the agreements reached by the parties.

The provisional coalition government will carry out a policy of national concord, ensure the democratic freedoms of the people, prohibit all acts of terror, reprisal, and discrimination against those who have collaborated with either side, stabilize and improve the living conditions of the people and organize general elections to form a coalition government.

The provisional coalition government will pursue a foreign policy of peace and neutrality, practice a policy of good neighborhood with the kingdom of Laos and the kingdom of Cambodia, respect the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, and territorial integrity of these two countries. It will establish diplomatic relations with all countries regardless of their political regime, including the United States, in accordance with the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

6) Vietnam is one, the Vietnamese people is one. The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step by step, by peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between the two zones without coercion or annexion from either side, without foreign interference. The time for reunification as well as all questions relating to the reunification will be discussed and agreed upon by both zones. Pending the peaceful reunification of the country, the two zones will re-establish normal relations in all fields on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and will respect each other's political regime, internal and external policies.

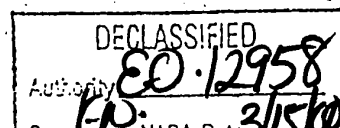
7) The parties will decide together measures aimed at ensuring the respect and the correct implementation of the provisions agreed



upon.

8) After the agreement on and signing of accords aimed at putting an end to the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, the parties will implement the modalities that will have been laid down for a cease-fire in South Vietnam.

To attain a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam declares its readiness to get henceforth in touch with the forces or persons of various political tendencies and religions in the country and abroad, including members of the present Saigon administration, except Thieu, Ky and Khiem.



MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

22129

ACTION

SECRET/NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS

September 18, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: A Longer Look at the New Communist Peace Proposal
on Vietnam

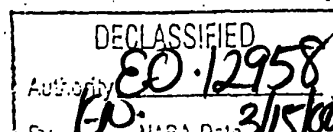
We have prepared a more detailed report on Mme. Binh's new proposal in Paris.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the attached memorandum for the President (Tab A).

Attachment

SECRET/NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS



NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE ROUTING AND CONTROL PROFORMA

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Proposal on VN

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